

9. THE FOREST WAGTAIL *MOTACILLA INDICA* GMELIN
IN THE GIR FOREST, SAURASHTRA

Recently I went to the Gir forest and while walking in a nullah where a stream was flowing I came across a Forest Wagtail, (*Motacilla indica* Gmelin) which flew away on seeing me, and I could distinctly see the white barring on the wings. This is the first time I have seen this bird in the Gir forest and perhaps constitutes a first record. In A SYNOPSIS OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN (p. 574) the bird is mentioned as 'a straggler on passage in Gujarat (rare)' and later said to 'winter in India from Saurashtra (Junagadh), Surat Dangs . . . and southwards'. I do not know on what basis it is said to occur in Saurashtra.

DIL BAHAR,

BHAVNAGAR,

December 20, 1962.

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[Sálim Ali (*J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* 52 : 779) obtained it in the Surat Dangs and said 'not observed elsewhere in that area, but possibly occurs in the Gir forest of Junagadh (Saurashtra)'. We were unable to trace any other published record in support of Dr. Ripley's statement, and Dr. Ripley also could not recall whence he had obtained this information, but thought it may have been based on a specimen collected by Dr. Walter Koelz. Inquiry at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, Chicago Natural History Museum, Chicago, Illinois, and Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan, where most of the Koelz collection is housed reveals no specimen (of this species) from Saurashtra, and it is possible that Dr. Ripley misquoted Sálim Ali and that the present is the first record from that area.—Eds.]

10. FIRST RECORD OF BEDDOME'S WOLF-SNAKE
LYCODON TRAVANCORICUS (BEDDOME), FROM THE
LACCADIVE ARCHIPELAGO

A juvenile specimen of the Wolf-Snake *Lycodon travancoricus* (Beddome), measuring 199 mm. in length, was captured during March 1962 by student-members of a Social Service League Camp engaged in the construction of a road at Androth (Long. 73° 57' E., Lat. 10° 48' N.), and was handed over to me later by P. Gopinathan Nambiar, now Headmaster of the Government High School, Ameni Island.

Though rare, it is well known to the natives of Androth who call it *Chera* [*Malayalam* name on the mainland for *Ptyas mucosus* (Linn.)] and what is interesting is that they refuse to consider this reptile as a snake at all! In Kerala this snake is called *Cheralav*, because of its superficial resemblance to *Ptyas mucosus* (Linn.).

Of the ten inhabited islands in the Laccadive group, Androth lies closest to the Indian peninsula, the distance to Calicut being only 139 miles. Inhabitants of no other island except Androth remember having ever come across a snake. The proximity of Androth to the mainland would suggest transportation as an easy possibility for the occurrence of the species in the island, and the collection of a juvenile indicates that the species is probably now breeding on the island. No other species of snake is known from the Laccadives.

L e p i d o s i s

Costals at mid-body	..	17
Ventrals	..	185
Caudals	..	67
Anal	..	1

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author is indebted to Miss Jennifer A. Cochrane of the British Museum (Natural History) for her help in lepidosis and identification of the specimen.

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September 23, 1962.

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[It is interesting to note that A. O. Hume in his article 'The Laccadives and the West Coast', *Stray Feathers*, Vol. IV, pp. 413-459, 1876, states that to control the rat population of the inhabited islands of the Archipelago 'Government sent down a lot of snakes and mongooses; the former, the people exterminated as undesirable colonists'. Perhaps the extermination was not complete and the specimen collected is a descendant of the ones that got away.—EDS.]